

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION INR-05

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USIAEA
E.O. 11652: XGDS-1,2
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, IAEA, TECH, KN, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET TRANSFER OF RESEARCH REACTOR FUEL TO
NORTH KOREA

REF: STATE 9025

1. WHILE I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE SPECIFIC DATES
AND QUANTITIES REQUESTED REFTEL, I WAS ABLE TO RAISE
MATTER INFORMALLY WITH RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL IN DEPARTMENT
OF SAFEGUARDS AND OBTAIN FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

2. SOME TEN YEARS AGO SOVIETS GAVE A SMALL RESEARCH
REACTOR TO NORTH KOREA. THIS WAS PRIOR TO THE NUCLEAR
NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY. TWO YEARS AGO THE NORTH KOREANS
ASKED THE SOVIETS TO PROVIDE FOR REFUELING OF THE REACTOR.
WHEN THEY DID THIS, THE SOVIETS INFORMED THEM THAT THEY
MUST FIRST CONCLUDE A SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT WITH THE IAEA.
AFTER SOME DELAYS THE NORTH KOREANS APPROACHED THE IAEA
BUT THE TWO SIDES HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING ONE
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ANOTHER EVEN IN RUSSIAN. THE NORTH KOREANS THEN ASKED
FOR THE AGENCY TO GIVE THEM A LETTER STATING THAT THEY
WERE NEGOTIATING A SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT WITH THE AGENCY
IN HOPES THE PRESENTATION OF SUCH A LETTER TO THE SOVIETS
WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO PERSUADE THE SOVIETS TO RELEASE
THE NECESSARY NUCLEAR MATERIAL TO REFUEL THE RESEARCH
REACTOR. THE AGENCY REFUSED TO GIVE SUCH A LETTER AND

INSTEAD REQUESTED THE HELP OF THE SOVIET MISSION, WHICH THEN "LEANED ON" THE NORTH KOREANS WHO, AFTER PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS, CONCLUDED THE PRESENT AGREEMENT, WHICH NOT ONLY COVERS THE NEW DELIVERY OF FUEL BUT ALSO THE RESEARCH REACTOR ITSELF (ENTERED INTO FORCE JULY 20, 1977 AND PUBLISHED AS INFCIRC 252).

3. DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES SUGGESTED TO THE NORTH KOREANS THAT THEY JOIN THE NPT BUT WERE INFORMED THAT THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED. THE FIRST IAEA INSPECTION IN NORTH KOREA IS TO TAKE PLACE IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS TIME WITH TWO INSPECTORS GOING, ONE A SOVIET NATIONAL AND THE OTHER A RUSSIAN SPEAKING INSPECTOR. THE AGENCY HAS HAD SOME DIFFICULTY IN ARRANGING TRAVEL AS THERE ARE ONLY THREE FLIGHTS PER WEEK INTO PYONGYANG. WHILE MY CONTACT CLAIMED HE DID NOT KNOW FOR CERTAIN ABOUT SHIPMENTS OF REACTOR FUEL, HE DID SAY THAT HE PRESUMED THAT THE NORTH KOREANS HAVE NOW RECEIVED THE SECOND LOAD FOR THEIR RESEARCH REACTOR.

4. PLEASE ADVISE IF FOREGOING INFORMATION SUFFICIENT OR WHETHER DEPARTMENT WISHES US UNDERTAKE FURTHER EFFORT OBTAIN MORE PRECISE DETAILS. STONE

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